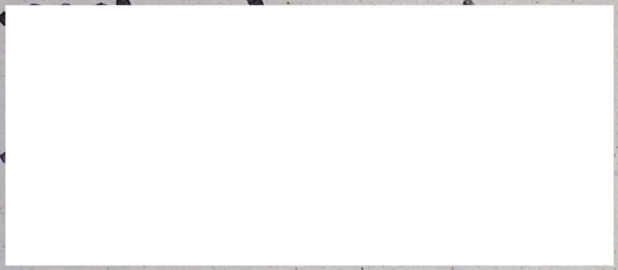
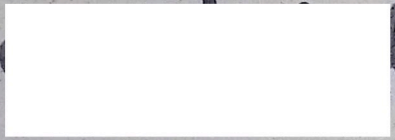
NO
BETTE
VOICE

no better voice





@ hotmail.
com

Layne told me she liked my introduction from NBV#27. "I appreciate knowing one's state of mind and intentions before I read her thoughts. That was very helpful - it helps me focus and gives a central thesis/guiding line for the words meanings, e," she wrote. I thought, "Shit if it worked for #27, why can't it work for #28" I was standing in the grocery store during a snowstorm trying to rip one of those produce bags off the spindle. Thumbing it's perforated edge I read, "Rip here. Open here." And I suddenly felt that this experience sums up exactly how I feel. **RIP HERE. OPEN HERE.** It was only seconds later as I pawed through this winter's sad crop of oranges that I changed my mind. This is how I feel, watching another man sniff, smell, squeeze, and otherwise molest the fruit. I'm feeling that I constantly have to bare my ruddy orange skin to the world - hardness, firmness, soft spots, bruises and all. Sometimes even bits of my insides hang out. I have to misjudge, miscalculate, offend, fuck up, make a general ass of myself, but sometimes do good! Oh yeah, and my mom says I need to "get off my soapbox." This is No Better Voice #28 and I want more letters/the world/a mango lassi/I don't know what I want, do you? Send it!

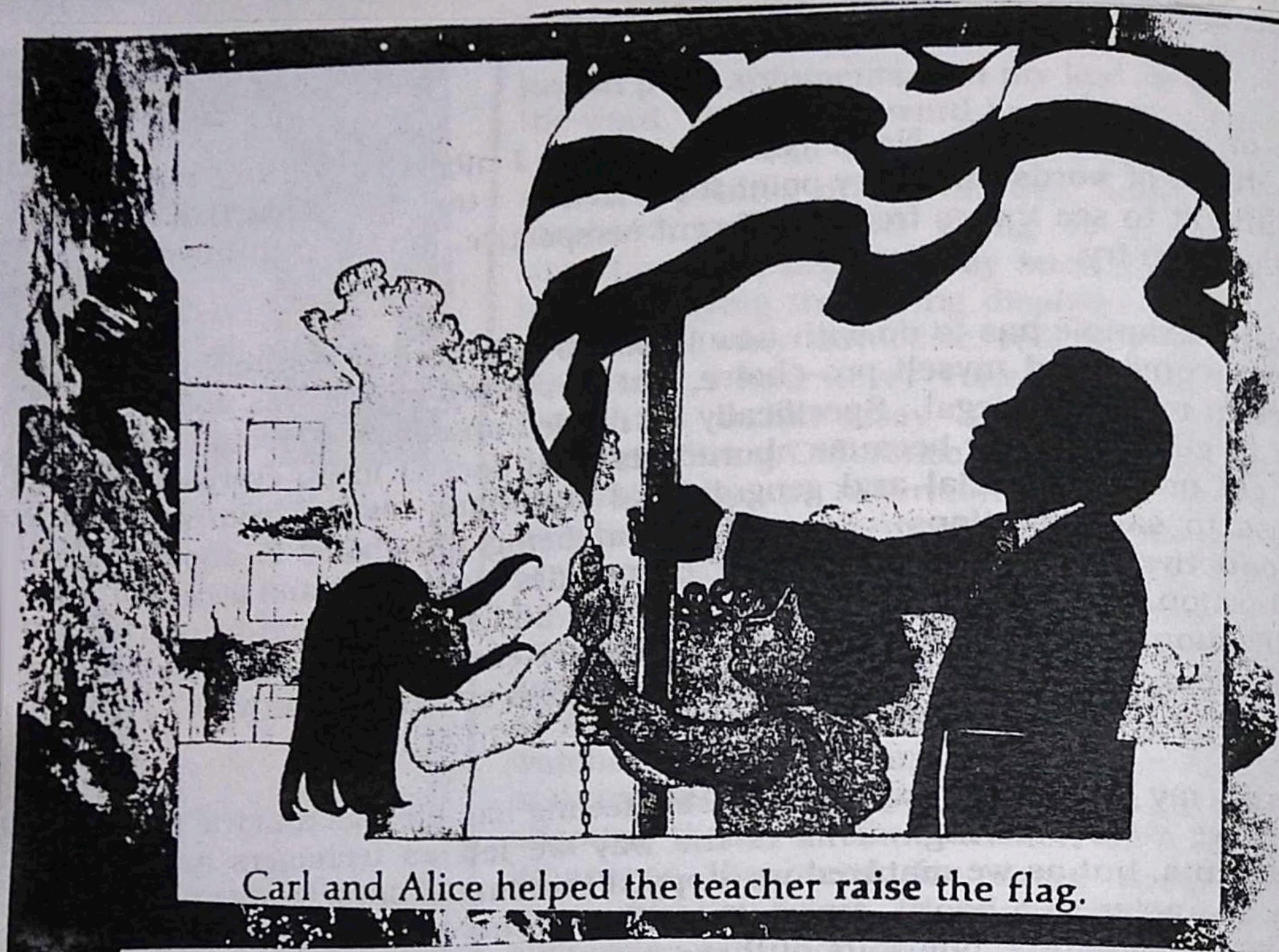
♡ jami

Sometimes words are used as weapons, and not just in petty arguments. In my last issue I used the word "lame" It's a word I used often because I thought it was harmless. This was until someone pointed out to me that lame refers to disabled people and using it to describe something in a negative way such as "racism is lame" is saying that being disabled is negative. That same day someone referred to me as disabled. I had never considered diabetes a disability. In her essay "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Redefining Difference" Audre Lorde writes, "Traditionally, in American society, it is the members of oppressed, objectified groups who are expected to stretch out and bridge the gap between the actualities of our lives and the consciousness of our oppressor. For in order to survive, those of us for whom the oppression is as American as apple pie have always had to be watches, to become familiar with the language and manners of the oppressor, even sometimes adopting them for some illusion of protection. Whenever the need for some pretense of communication arises, those who profit from our oppression call upon us to share our knowledge with them. In other words, it is the responsibility of the oppressed to teach the oppressors their mistakes." I feel I fall into this

line of thinking often. Never considering who I might be hurting with my choice of words until they point it out to me. I use the excuse that it is difficult to see things from a different perspective, but in truth I don't think I even try.

Another example has to do with how I used to feel toward abortion. I've always considered myself pro-choice, but to me pro-choice was about abortion remaining legal. Specifically if I needed an abortion I would be able to get one. Just because abortion is legal doesn't mean everyone can get one. Financial and geographical situations restrict women's access to safe abortions. I now feel that being pro-choice is about reproductive freedom for everyone. This includes availability and access to abortion, birth control, sexual education, and freedom from forced sterilization and coerced birth control. This re-examination makes me more and more aware of my own self-centeredness and ethnocentricity.

Recently my friend and I were discussing feeling like life was a movie in which we were starring. This is the way we felt as teenagers and adolescents, but as we matured we stopped thinking of ourselves as the main character in a book. American culture seems to teach us from a very young age to be oblivious of those around us and to place anyone unlike us in the category of other. It's prevalent in the myth that poor people want or deserve to live in poverty, that all fat people eat too much, and that women are just better at doing menial labor. The words we use help secure these imaginary boundaries between us.



Carl and Alice helped the teacher raise the flag.

When asked by a 1984 Gallup poll whether they placed a higher value on freedom or on equality, Americans chose freedom by 72 percent to 20 percent. The margins for Europeans was 49 percent to 35 percent. How much do you think this has changed in 21 years? Do Americans value "freedom" even more in these post 9/11 times? Is freedom only the right to purchase, consume, work, and (sometimes) sustain?

bomb em

I refer to a certain type of people as "Bomb em" who are not-so-distant cousins of "Love it or Leave it." "Bomb em" and "Love it or Leave it" are characterized by vast, uneducated assumptions about nearly everything worldly, including US political culture. Sometimes I know I've insulated myself too much in radical communities when my only interaction with "Bomb em" is on local talk radio. A local DJ was pontificating on the issue of armor for Hummers, "If we stopped giving so much money to other countries we'd be able to give our soldiers (in honesty I think he used the word "boys" not soldiers, but that's another issue altogether) the equipment they need to finish the job." He went on for fifteen minutes, which is a lot of airtime (about three Nelly songs!) attacking foreign aid. During this time he did not site one source of info, a fact, or another news source, just an outpouring of pure guttural emotion. On this very topic the text book used by my recent political science class states, "Many Americans share the view that United States ought not to be funding discretionary programs abroad when there are there are pressing needs at home. The unpopularity of foreign aid is also a consequence of the public exaggerated notion of how much the US spends in this area. In a

relationships to men. The men who are attracted to these females are

1994 poll that asked respondents to name the largest federal programs, foreign aid was at the top of the list (27 percent said it was the most expensive federal program). In fact, foreign aid is near the bottom, accounting for less than 1 percent of the total federal budget." The US has the highest GNP but spends the least of any developed country on foreign aid. In stark contrast, more than $259 billion a year is spent to maintain the United States military. This accounts for nearly 5 percent of the gross national product (GNP). This is compared with the 0.10% that is spent on foreign aid (mostly to Israel). Much of the money the US spends on foreign aid is either to create an ally (such as it's expenditures in Israel) or to create a market place for US goods. Congress has frozen spending in all other arenas besides military and homeland security for 2005. Although programs weren't directly cut a freeze on spending does not account for inflation. When inflation is considered spending has been cut 14%.

The textbook quoted is The American Democracy sixth edition by Thomas Patterson. This book later refers to immigrants who try to illegally enter the United States as "boat people" (p 548) The 1994 poll was sited from Hobart Rowen's "The Budget: Fact or Fiction," appearing in the *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, January 16 – 22, 1995. All the GNP spending info came from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2002. The budget freeze was heard on NPR. I really shouldn't site my sources this way.

oh the HORROR

I enjoy horror movies and used to frequent a web board for horror fans. I stopped when people started posting questions and comments using racist monikers. When called out on this point these people claimed that their screen names and icons didn't pertain to this community and since it was merely an "entertainment" subject (horror) that these points (racist names and icons) were not to be questioned in this forum. Besides a "the personal is the political" battle cry I had two main objections to their assumptions that horror (and other entertainment, for example, where you get your news from) is not political or influenced by politics. Being an amateur horror scholar I find that horror movies do set forth a specific agenda. That agenda is usually to push mainstream views of right and wrong on it's viewers. A much-cited example of this has been documented from slasher films. The kids who break the "rules" usually suffer grim and horrific deaths because of their wrongdoing. The pure are spared, but not before witnessing the death of their friends (guilt by association?). Horror movies DO speak to my political side. It is no coincident that horror movies gain popularity during times of strife and turmoil, specifically during wartime. Horror movies also usually identify those who do not conform to gender roles as monsters, Men who act feminine, queers, and women with power are all cast as villains or victims, never survivors. In slasher films, women who do survive are characterized as male, with ambiguous names and sexless relationships to men. The men who are attracted to these females are

usually the only ones who are as brutalized as their female counterparts on screen, perhaps because by being attracted to the gender ambiguous or male coded female they are viewed as queer. *The Exorcist* is an excellent example of film xenophobia. During several scenes in the film foreigners are cast as outsiders. My second argument about entertainment being political is that politics determine what films we are allowed to consume, which films are viewed as outsider (which most horror films are, especially if not made by the Hollywood machine) and how these films will be viewed. The following article was written as an exploration of family relationships in *The Exorcist* and what values the film is trying to convey to the viewer. The article, in retrospect (it was written over a year ago) feels very psychoanalytical. I hate Freud, but think some of the info is relevant to my argument that horror movies are politically important.

the EXORCIST

Women have always figured strongly in horror films. They take key positions as victim, survivor, and/or monster. The mother/child relationship is frequently exploited in such films, especially and particularly the break between child and mother. Sometimes the lack of break, such as in Hitchcock's *Psycho* is what produces the terror. One of the main themes in *The Exorcist* is the break of child from mother.

In her book The Monstrous-Feminine, Barbara Creed evaluates *The Exorcist* on psycho-analytical and mythical levels. She defines that which is monstrous, vile, and dirty as "the abject." Abjection comes from contact with that which is unclean such as excrement, urine, blood, decay, and corpses. During early childhood it is traditionally the mother's duty to teach the child about it's body and how to keep it's body clean. This is seen as normal and healthy. Once a child reaches puberty it is the child's duty to reject the mother for the world of the father, the subject world. This rejection, along with her traditional role as caregiver, makes the mother abject. (Creed, 39)

There are three mother/child relationships that are present in *The Exorcist*. The first is between Regan and her mother, Chris. This relationship is central to the film. The second relationship is between Father Damien Karras and his aging mother. The last (and mostly symbolic) is the biblical relationship between Christ and his mother, Mary.

The two main mother/child relationships are fatherless. The film emphasizes mothers and absentee fathers. (Williams, 115). Regan's father is abroad. Not only is he not physically available, he is also emotionally unavailable. There is a scene where Chris is waiting for him on the phone on Regan's birthday. He hasn't called. Regan overhears her mother cursing her father. This causes strife. Later Chris discovers a movie star magazine featuring gossip concerning their family hidden in Regan's bed. Regan questions her mother

about her relationship with director Dennings and her father. This is the first sign of dissent in what seems like a stable mother/daughter relationship. Another telling scene takes place in the family basement. Although not mentioned in the film, the book calls Regan's father Howard. (Williams, 112). While playing with the Ouija Board, Regan names "Captain Howie" as her consort. Captain Howie is Regan's representation of her missing father. (Williams, 112). This explains Captain Howie's refusal to play with Chris or comment on her desirability. Regan is acting out due to lack of a father figure.

The second mother/child relationship involves Karras and his elderly mother. Karras' mother is usually shown shrouded in darkness and is reminiscent of the old crones at the beginning of the film. A father is not mentioned of even hinted at in this relationship. Karras' loss of faith and emotional turmoil are directly connected to the break with his mother. He cannot take care of her financially due to his occupation. Several scenes show Karras ignoring or rejecting elderly and/or feeble people. One scene involves a beggar on the subway. Another takes place when he visits his mother in the state mental hospital. When he visits his mother elderly women in her ward surround him, asking for help when they see his priest collar. In this scene Karras' loyalties do not lay with his occupation as priest (to the father) but to his mother. Karras' ultimate guilt lies in the fact that his mother died alone.

The third relationship, although symbolic, predates Regan's possession. It is that of the Virgin Mary and her son, Jesus Christ. As foreshadowing the statue of Mary is decimated. The attack on

Mary is an attack on motherhood. The facts that phallic-like breasts and genitals are attached to the statue also represent the repressed male qualities denied women. In short woman can't raise children alone because they are lacking. Fathers are needed. Also this underlines gender roles based on strict rules governing what is appropriate for male and female.

Possessed Regan represents the abject. She wallows in abjection. Not only is she evil because she is possessed but the fact that she is at an age when she is supposed to break with her mother. She refuses to do this. She attacks all that is subject of symbolic. She rejects law, medicine, religion, and motherhood all that are institutions that depend on the family to maintain female subordination. (Williams, 112). Not only is she returning to a state where her mother must take care of her but also she is rejecting all that is coded male or fatherly. For this purpose Chris, with her gender ambiguous name, is coded as symbolic, not abject. The film in which she is acting cues us to this. *The Exorcist* was made in the wake of Vietnam, a war that drew lines between parent and child like no other event in history. The film in which Chris is acting shows her defending the rights of students who want to learn while others are protesting. Chris is part of the establishment, a parent, the symbolic.

A fatherless relationship does not necessarily mean a sexless one. Incest and homosexuality are hinted. Regan is jealous of her mother's boyfriend Dennings who is the first to die. Later the demon mocks

Chris in Dennings voice. The mother/daughter relationship is dotted with physical contact, hugging, kissing, caressing, and giggling. Mother and daughter flirt. Possessed Regan's' sexual assault on her mother highlights this point. What the film might be suggesting is that without the break between mother and child, homosexuality will result.

Not only is the Regan/Chris relationship fatherless, it is also devoid of religion. Enter Karras and, to a lesser degree, Father Merrin. These men are priests as fathers. Karras can be seen as the father while Merrin is the grandfather. They come to restore order and cleanse the dirty, misbehaving child. The demon can be seen as the break between mother/child. Its manifestation is in order because Chris and Regan have co-existed on a fatherless level. *The Exorcist* takes the stance that a child without a father is incomplete. It is telling that the film is named for the father figure, *The Exorcist*.

Father Marrin dies, as grandfathers will, of old are and because he is weak. Karras' virility is questioned by the demon who taunts him in his mother's voice. Karass is coded as weak, due to his lack of faith and latent homosexuality. To prove his strength he must take the demon into himself. Karass' possession and ultimate death restore symbolic order. The father has overcome the abject.

Motherhood is demonized in horror films. Killers, freaks and psychopaths are usually fatherless children who have not made the

"necessary break" from their mothers. In *The Exorcist* the characters that have not made this break are punished; Regan and Chris with the events of possession and Father Karass with his guilt and death. These characters are redeemed at the end. When Karass takes the demon into his body he makes the necessary break and becomes a complete man, father. To award him for his acceptance of this role he is given last rites before his death. In one of the last scenes Regan hugs a priest when she sees his collar. This is a cue that she has made the break from mother and has accepted the father as rule maker. The film ends with the lines drawn between the abject and the symbolic, order and chaos. Motherhood is returned to its proper place below fatherhood, if only metaphorically. Creed states, "Woman is constructed as possessed when she attacks the symbolic order, highlights it's weaknesses, plays on it's vulnerabilities; specifically, she demonstrates that the symbolic order is a sham built on sexual repression and the sacrifice of the mother. In the end Regan and her mother are reunited; the two 'fathers' are dead. The symbolic order is restored, but in name only." (Creed, 41).

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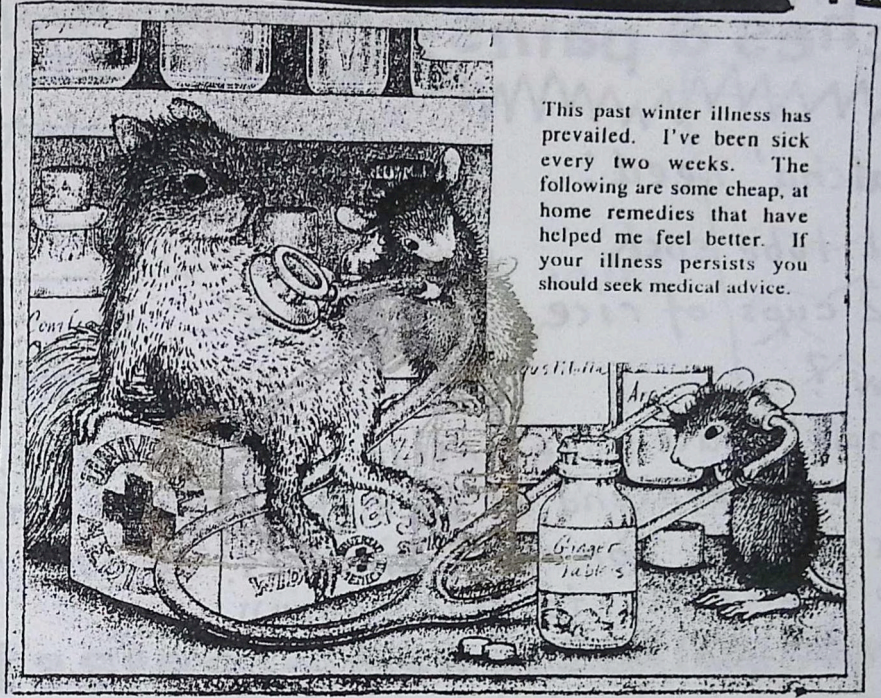
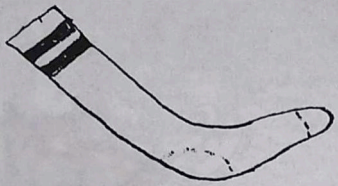
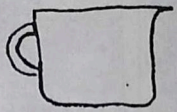


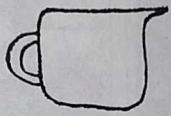
This past winter illness has prevailed. I've been sick every two weeks. The following are some cheap, at home remedies that have helped me feel better. If your illness persists you should seek medical advice.

aches & pains

make your own heating pad!







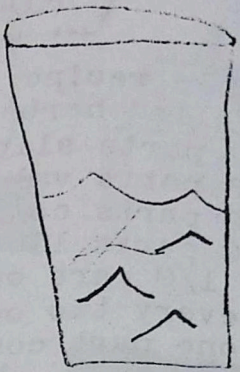
whatcha' need:

- 1 tube sock
- 2 cups of rice

how?

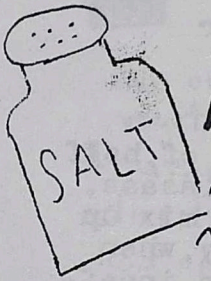
simple! place rice inside of tube sock. tie off open end of sock. HEAT sock in microwave for 2-5 minutes. do not apply directly to skin ((OUCH)). add lavender for soothing scent i don't think these can be heated in the oven, so don't.

sore throat



whatcha need:

- 1 tbsp table salt
- 8 oz water



how?

mix salt and water. gargle.
repeat every hour.

tastes gross seriously

herbal cough syrup

this recipe is from a book by rosemarry gladstar called herbal healing for women. its awesome.

2 parts slippery elm
2 parts valerian
2 parts comfrey
2 parts licorice
1/8 part orange peel
4 parts fennel seeds
1 part wild cherry
1 part ginger root
1 part cinnamon

every two ounces is one quart of water
one part equals one half ounce

boil everything together
reduce by half
add equal amount of sugar, of half the amount of honey or mollasass,
bring to just a boil, then mix in brandy. bottle/label/enjoy. when refrigerated it will keep indefinitly.
this recipe will make a lot of syrup. you would always reduce it but would-nt it be better to give a bunch away to your friends?

This recipe thanks to Jessika Rae. It can also be found, along with other herbal health recipes in her zine, Do Not File Under Manifesto #7.

Seasons of aromatherapy
judith fitzsimmons
paula m. bousquet

stomachache

- 2 drops fennel
- 3 drops peppermint

-mix oils together in 1 teaspoon of vegetable oil
-massaging the blend in a clockwise direction, massage both the lower and upper abdomen

hiccup cure

1 drop of fennel in brown paper bag inhale

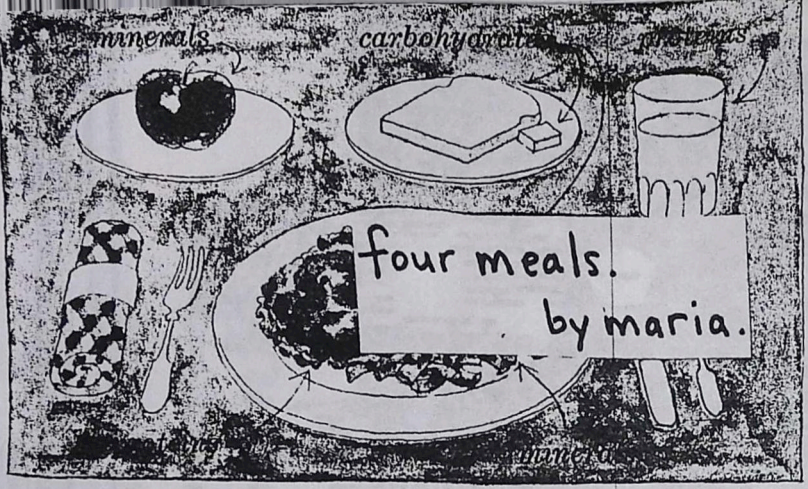
Hello. Recently I have been seeing your ads up in State Hall and while I appreciate the sentiment I think there are some very important issues related to reproductive health that you are missing. The ads I am specifically speaking about say something to the effect of "Stop making women chose between children and jobs/careers" I consider myself "pro-choice" which means I think every woman should be able to decide whether she wants to have children or not, regardless of economic, class, sexual orientation, race, age, disability, etc. If a woman wants a child she should not be discouraged because she cannot afford it. Sadly women's work is not valued by our society that has long expected women to provide cheap or free labor. This is the situation that I think your ads are aiming at - that a women should not feel she has to have an abortion because she cannot afford a child or for fear her career or future career will be affected. I can respect people who think abortion is wrong, but I think these people's time would be better spent lobbying and pushing politically for more comprehensive birth control and sex education so that people who do not want to have children (for whatever reason, which really - is none of your business) don't have to if they don't want. Most heterosexual women of reproductive age have the chance of becoming pregnant if they are sexual active. Believe it or not there are married women who do not want children (if you are of the belief that only married people should have sex) The point is - if women have sex with men they have the chance of getting pregnant and I think if they need to have an abortion it should be "allowed" (women will find ways to have abortions whether they are legal or not) If you are against abortion you should try to find ways to make abortion less necessary - like comprehensive birth control and sex education. I would like to know what your group is doing in this vein and would like to open a dialogue between people (women specifically) about the social, political and emotion ramifications of being denied access and information about reproductive health. I also feel that your ad featuring an African American child saying that pro-choice advocates make children the enemy is very racial charged. It insinuates that this is a specifically race orientated issue women having abortions because of financial reasons) I would suggest if you must advertise in this way having an ad that features children of different ethnic backgrounds. Thank you.

This is a letter I wrote in response to WSU for Life using ads provided by Feminists for Life. The three ads I saw featured words to the tune of "Pro-choice advocates make women chose between children/family and a career/financial success." One of the ads featured a white woman with a child. The other two features either an African American woman looking distressed or an African American child. It is my opinion that to be a feminist one has to agree that, regardless of how they feel about abortion, a woman should have safe and legal access to one. My recent efforts have been to reach out to pro-life/anti-choice groups to open up a dialogue about the futility of trying to ban abortions and the possibility of them shifting their efforts to make abortions less common, needed, and necessary. This includes comprehensive reproductive health care, access to contraceptives and sexual education. It also entails changing roles of woman in society, view of woman especially from different socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic groups and valuing the work traditionally done by women. This is just the tip of the iceberg (all of this) and a steep hill to climb, but I've got a lot of provisions packed for the road.

estions are you a part of a

49% minority?

no is the system work- f-?



one.

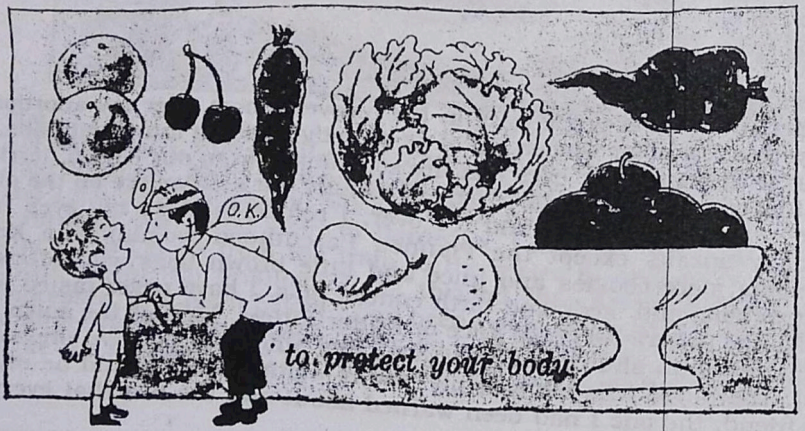
L'as du Falafel, Rue des Rosiers, Paris. Falafel Special with hummus and fried eggplant, gooey, dripping, oily sweet eggplant. Aaron von Spyglass and I eat in an alleyway, sitting on our backpacks, fresh off the bullet train from our metal show in Bordeaux. I feel like a total Paris expert, that I can get us from the train to the metro to the best falafel in the entire world, no problem. I am thrilled that Aaron von Spyglass is impressed. The night before I had been ready to sleep with him, so ready to forget the boyfriend back home, so ready to scream loud and long and wake up everyone else in the skuzzy French hotel. I felt like I was in

"Delicatessen," the wallpaper was perfect and I was delighted. I pressed in to spoon him in that bed, feeling the multiple beers we had consumed in the empty construction lot before and after the show, feeling the ease and friendship between us that had grown so much over the past week, feeling the way he had instinctively befriended in when dudes approached me at the show that night. I was ready for it. And he said, through that thickness and expectation in bed that night, "Can you turn over? Your toothpaste is really strong and it's kind of making me sick." The end. The falafel is the best thing either of us has eaten in a long time and we don't talk at all except to exclaim "Oh. My. God." occasionally over how fucking good it is. The eggplant is sex in a pita and I don't regret that nothing happened last night, that nothing will ever happen between us.

two.

NutterButters and grape juice in the recovery room after my abortion. I sit with a few other women, all of us secretly bleeding into giant pads, all of us with glazed-over eyes that are so changed from our closed, terrified waiting room eyes. We still avoid eye contact but now we are on the other side, we actually did it and it's over. I refuse to close my eyes now. Nobody speaks except the Planned Parenthood woman who keeps bringing more cookies and juice and little brown bags with aftercare instructions and meds and birth control pills. I have never tasted such delicious, restorative grape juice or NutterButters. I inhale the sugar and keep my brain shut down as it has been since the positive pregnancy test. The nurse tells me that my ride is waiting. That would be my ex-boyfriend, the one I had been warned about and the one that everyone

but me was right about. For two weeks he has been begging, screaming, crying, threatening, trying to force me to have the baby. He is insane. I figure he shouldn't have to wait for me, and I try to stand up but get dizzy and am glad when the nurse makes me sit back down for another half an hour. When I do leave the clinic, I find that my ex-boyfriend has brought along a friend. For the ride. To pick me up. At the Planned Parenthood. Where I just had an abortion. Everything's back to normal, I realize, except now all I will ever eat for the rest of my life is grape juice and NutterButters; I have found the perfect meal.



...she should change the

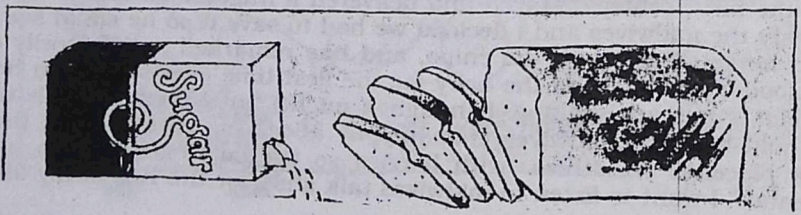
three.

I stopped talking to him abruptly, basically in the middle of a make out sesh that was going too far for me to ignore the fact that he was a boy and I was a dyke. I didn't talk to him for a year, which is a huge feat considering the fact that we lived together. But then I moved out, started feeling shitty about the way I treated him, realized that I'd been missing him, and wrote him a profusely apologetic letter. We decided to have lunch and talk about things. The meal was going ok until I said, "I've started sleeping with my housemate." He froze, stared at his food. I said, "um." I couldn't taste my food at all. He said quietly, "I feel sick." My chest started to ache. I think I fell in Secret, Forever-to-be-Left-Unspoken Love with him right then, because it was true and pure and horrible and simple and he really should have kicked me hard under the table and then left me with the bill, but he just sat unmoving, curling away from me. We left the restaurant and hugged and avoided eye contact. It's still like that sometimes.

four.

First meal after giving birth: chocolate soymilk, salt and vinegar chips. The baby daddy ran over to the 24-hour grocery store across the street from the birth center. I stayed and delivered a huge blood clot that was so nasty the midwives and I decided we had to save it so he could see it. When he gets back with the chips, and has remarked satisfactorily on the blood clot, I let go of the baby for the first time ever so he can hold her. His hands are shaking. I thought I might, but I don't mind letting him hold her. The midwives chat happily about patients making them drink placenta smoothies "with berries so the color seems less, um, placental." I want to listen to midwives talk shop for the rest of my life. I

want to give birth over and over so I can watch them work. The snacks he brought are not nearly enough for all of us, I'm sure the midwives ate at some point during the labor but I haven't since I vomited Honey Nut Cheerios immediately after my water broke. As we all devour the chips, I nurse my daughter for the first time. The midwife helps me hold her along my side, I'm scared to put any pressure on her perfect, floppy neck but I have to hold her head to the boob and the fragility of the thing that I just birthed is terrifying and intoxicating. I am pretty seriously freaked out about having to be this thing's mother. I tilt her head so my nipple brushes her mouth and she automatically opens her little bird mouth and clamps on. Somehow her sucking is more like chomping, this tiny little alien is munching on my boob and it tickles. She stares at me seriously. She is a serious baby. She looks like she's trying to explain some boring mathematical theory to an unpromising novice, she's extremely earnest and hopes that I will get it. My face is her entire world, except of course for the boob in her mouth, but she's still running the show. This is good. We spend the night curled together in the bed she was born in. She still gets that serious face when she nurses, and it still makes me laugh.



i told jessika rae she should change the name to "DO NOT FILE UNDER MANIFESTA"

The following article was originally written as a thesis paper for a women's studies class. The assignment was to review the book Manifesta and write about a form of activism we could/would take part in that was related to a "women's cause" I chose to write about the activism I do surrounding zines. This was written assuming the reader knew little to nothing about zine culture, so please excuse it if you are well learned in the history of zines. I only wrote about zines as they are connected to feminism.

Manifesta is a call to arms for young women to embrace feminism and the activism that goes along with wanting to create an equal environment for everyone. Written by twenty-somethings Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, it's goals are two fold. It tries to dispel common myths about the F word including all feminists are white, man hating, and probably lesbians. It also tries to activate and inspire young women to get involved in feminist activism and includes extensive appendixes filled with info and contacts on ways to get involved in feminist work.

While well intentioned, Manifesta isn't perfect. It is difficult to understand whom the book is trying to address. Is it aimed at women who did not consider themselves feminists, despite actions that might say they are, or women who already consider themselves feminists? At times it almost insults my intelligence with phrases such as "booty related disease"(30) used to describe sexually transmitted diseases early on in the book.

At other times the book is condescending, for example in its description of "Girlies", a term I have never heard used before in my years of being an "out" feminist.

"Girlie" is described as "adult women, usually in their mid-twenties to late thirties, whose feminist principles are based on reclaiming of girl culture (or feminine accoutrements that were tossed out with sexism during the Second Wave)" (400). Manifesta typifies a "Girlie" as a reader of *Bust*, *Jane* or *Bitch*. To Girlie or not seems the age old "Am I still a feminist if I shave my legs?" question. To me the term "Girlie" is as insulting as the term used later in the book "Do Me Feminist." Manifesta states, "The Do Mes, with their lipstick and flip comments, are like the Girlies (in fact, many of the Do Mes are the same women we call Girlies), but the Do Me label is entirely a media construct." If Do Me is a media construct, "Girlie" is a Manifesta construct. Instead of dissecting the Girlie movement, and begrudgingly allowing "girlies" to play their feminist reindeer games, Manifesta should work to unify women toward feminism.

Which brings us to my next criticism, Manifesta spends far too much time talking about the differences between Second and Third Wave feminism, trying so hard to both join and separate Third Wave goals and intentions from the Second Wave while still stating that Second Wave literature is important. Instead of giving minute examples of arguments between figureheads of both movements, Manifesta should give more examples as to why and how First and Second Wave literature and thought is important to Third Wave and continuing a feminist history. At times I thought the authors would have been better off trying to get some of those out of print Second Wave classics in print as opposed to writing this sometimes bitchy, mostly elitist text. Manifesta would have been much more powerful had it relegated it's "The Second Wave is our friend" message to one of the appendixes by including a list of First and Second Wave books.

The biggest problem I had with Manifesta was it's elitist tone. While paying lip service to women unlike themselves, Baumgardner and Richards come from the same place, white and middle to upper class. In her introduction Baumgardner talks about interviewing international star Bjork for *Bust* magazine. After asking Bjork why she

divorced the father of her son after only a year Bjork replied "Why suffer?" and this became a mantra for Baumgardner as she and Richards. "went to Cuba, organized intergenerational readings, attended sample sales, and wrote a fucking book." It is nice that they have the luxury to do these things. Baumgardner and Richards with their connections to the feminist book regime via their time at *Ms.* and Bjork have the resources to ask, "Why suffer?" I agree with the sentiment, but the way Baumgarder and Richard talk about their personal awaking at the end of Manifesta (267 – 276) literally made me want to puke. A call to arms would only be effective if every woman could relate to the need for one. Although we all may feel the effects of sexism, racism, Classism, etc we are all at different levels of understanding and have different resources available to us when taking on an activist role.

There are parts of Manifesta that are worthwhile. The most effective thing about Manifesta is the actual "Manifesta" (278-280), which outlines thirteen important goals towards equal rights. The list includes demands for comprehensive reproductive rights, making feminist history known, and having workplace reflect individual's talents, to name a few. Supposedly what the whole Manifesta mess wa. leading up the book would have been better suited basing it's whole structure on the thirteen point list. Instead of having all the background info on these goals come first each chapter should have been a point from the Manifesta list. For example, point 7 states, "To practice "autokeonony" ("self in community"): to see activism not as a choice between self and community but as a link between them that creates balance" (280) should be a chapter in itself, explaining why this is important with facts and examples backing it up. Instead, "autokeonony" is described some 50 pages before the "manifesta"

Throughout the book there are many examples of women and girls taking part in activism. Another suggestion is to make this the forefront of the book, not added on reasons why "EVEN YOU!" can be an activist. The most important thing to remember about activism is that anyone can do it and that it doesn't have to be picketing, organizing, or

protesting (although it can be). Actions like boycotting Wal-Mart or reading to a young girl stories featuring empowered female characters is just as important. Baumgardner and Richards talk about organizing a voter registration drive in "poor communities" To me, this feels like "helping people who don't have as much as us." Instead of looking outside your community (where there are undoubtedly also "poor people") why not work inside and with people in your community. Work toward common goals, underlining everyone's abilities (and not just "we are giving to you because you have less"), and not just doing "charity" work.

As a whole the book seems condescending to anyone currently involved in feminist work, completely full of itself, and unsympathetic to individuals who aren't like the writers. The strongest part of the book is the actual "manifesta" and hopefully those who read it will come away with some of it's points as personal goals. The appendixes are full of (somewhat outdated) info, but could also be used to help organize things in your own community. Manifesta has good intentions, but sometimes good intentions go bad.

In the first chapter of Manifesta the authors' write about talking to other women about their abortions and STDs. Afterwards they state, "Even if people don't judge a woman who has a sexually transmitted disease – or one who is depressed, bulimic, has been raped or sexually molested, chooses to sleep with a lot of people, ends an unwanted pregnancy, or brings a child into this world despite her poverty – that woman is still certain that the rest of the human race will condemn her. That's why women have long been radicalized by telling their secrets to each other." (Baumgardner, 28) When first thinking about the activities I do that I consider activism from interning for members of Congress to radical cheerleading (groups that include both male and female participants that use cheers about reproductive rights, equal pay, and bicyclers rights -to name a few- to raise awareness on these issues) the

one that is most personal and most outreaching is my work selling and distributing zines. When I asked about using this as my topic my teacher said I had to pick one specific issue that I wanted to work with, any topic, as long as it was singular. Well, I have to say that all arms of oppression link together to keep people down on any and various issues. The topic I chose is "communication" specifically, but not solely, those between women who have stories and secrets they wish to share as to not feel so alone.

Stolen Sharpie Revolution: A DIY Zine Resource defines a zine as "an independently produced publication containing anything you want; personal experiences and stories, political ideologies, music related writing, gardening tips, fiction, travel stories, comics, photography, or anything you like. Zines can be put together by one person or a group of people and they are usually photocopied but can also be printed offset, letter press, or mimeographed." (Wrekk, 3) I would add to this definition that zines usually have a circulation under 2,000 and are not produced for profits.

Zines have always been a way for women to communicate with each other about topics that were otherwise taboo. In 1916, Margaret Sanger was arrested under the *Comstock Law* for distributing a zine that told women how to use and obtain birth control. (Feldt, 38) The *Comstock* Law, passed in 1873, was a federal obscenity statute that prohibited the sale of materials mentioning birth control or abortion. (Feldt, 39) When she was arrested, Sanger said, the laws were, "designed to aid and abet both moral and religious prejudice and persecutions." (Haney) Sanger's work as a birth control advocate was mentioned as a driving force to the 1965 ruling that allowed couples to use birth control (along with the 1972 ruling that made it legal for singles also).

Other examples of how zines have been used to kick start feminist action are Alison Wolfstein and Molly Newman's *Riot Grrrl*, Tobi Vale and Kathleen Hanna's *Bikini Kill* (which was a zine before it was a band), Hanna's solo project *April Fool's Day* and

Tammy Rae's *I (heart) Amy Carter*. These zines started the Riot Grrrl movement that helped young women in the early nineties express their outrage at the prevalence of rape, inequality and sexism in American society. Through these zines girls across the country made connections, started bands, art spaces, and organized festivals featuring female artists. In these zines one could read about the authors experience with rape, harassment, drug abuse, and other taboo topics. With this writing women were saying, "We aren't going to be quiet anymore!" At the same time girls like Nomy Lamm wrote about their experiences with fat phobia. Lamm's zine was just the start of her activism and lead to her writing a play about her experience as a "fat ass, bad ass, jew, dyke amputee" (www.nomylamm.com) For many of these women, zines were about communication and were just the beginning of their life as activists.

I have been writing my zine, *No Better Voice*, since 1995 when I was in 10th grade. I've written about racism, annoyance with my romantic partners, fights with friends, body image, abortion, and radical menstruation, to name just a few. Yes, these are all different topics and not a single issue, but I find each person's issues are intertwined to all their other issues. There is no single issue that isn't connected. Through zines, my own and others, I have explored the connections between these various issues. Communication and education is the first step to action.

As for my zine distro, Stranger Danger (www.strangerdangerdistro.com), I distribute different types of zines dealing with every issue on the map. I do this project with my friend, radical queer activist Shaun Allen, author *Larceny* zine. Between us we have brought to the distro zines ranging in topics from homophobia (Dave Fried's *How I Learned to Love Myself, and sometimes other men*), STDs (Jenny's *I Have Herpes and it fucking Sucks*) abortion stories (Merrydeath's *MINE* anthology) herbal abortions (Jessika Rae's *Do Not File Under Manifesto*) fat phobia (fat positive activist Kristi's *Figure 8*) white privilege

(Josh Browniekid's *Excuse Me, Can You Please Pass the Privilege*) rape (*Doris*) and activism to realize that tattooed people are people too (tattoo artist and mother Sage Adderley's *Tattoo Memoirs*).

Besides selling zines to other people who make zines Shaun and I distribute zines to organizations such as Planned Parenthood. When we were in Portland for the Portland Zine Symposium the head of the Portland PP picked up twenty issues of *I Have Herpes and It Fucking Sucks*. We also get zines into the hands of people who have never heard of a zine before. This has lead to more people writing and sharing their stories, not feeling so alone in the world.

While I feel many subcultures have been co-opted by the mainstream I feel that zines are still an underground community that supports itself. This is above any criticism I might have for the zine community, which pale in comparison to the support I have found and seen while being a part of it. With that said, I think I am going to take a break from zines for a while. This issue was difficult for me. Throughout the past semester this issue has been brewing, in fact many of the ideas and articles were inspired by class discussion. While in university zines are distracting, and while writing a zine university is distracting. My personal zine writing and making process dictates that I write a zine right through without stopping so I don't get sidetracked and let the zine sit and get dated. My study habits dictate that I don't have time to write a zine without taking breaks. This is one frustration I had while making this issue. I had to wait for winter break to make it and I had to rush to get it done before class started again. Another issue that has helped me decide to take a break from zines is that I feel I spend too

much time talking theory and skirting issues writing a zine. For a while I think I need to work on some of the issues I talk about in my zine. I need to take action and not just write about taking action. Some people do both. I feel I don't do enough. Older issues of my zine focus on my romantic life, even if they don't directly say that. I now live with my partner and feel that the issues I have in my romantic life aren't easily written about unless resolved. I don't wish to air our dirty laundry and since each relationship is different I don't know if some of the resolutions we reach will be applicable for others. I feel older issues of my zine are less political than the last two issues and focus more on humor. Politics and humor are two areas I have been trying to balance in my life. My activist friends seem to think I am not serious enough while my party friends think I am too serious. I need to find a medium for me and this zine swings too much one way or the other for me to do that. I find it near impossible to write a personal story without either making it political or feeling it is pointless and only funny to my friends. This sometimes contributes to my feelings of not belonging in the zine community. This is my own feeling and not anything anyone else has made me feel. A third reason is I feel I am being too preachy. I also feel I am preaching to the choir. This is connected to feeling like I am not active enough. I need to act on my politics and not just talk about them with other people who agree with me. I feel I have insulated myself too much. So for the next year I plan on interning, working to get my degree in political science, playing music with my friends, making art (and trying to avoid the commercialization of the art community), talking to my parents and trying to help them understand where I am coming from, plus more. I am sure you will see another issue of No Better Voice soon enough.

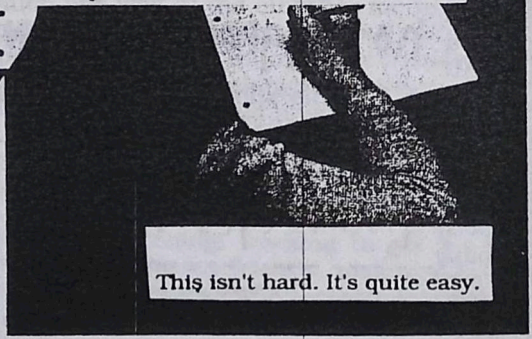
"We have one and a half queers in our band!" Dan felt stupid

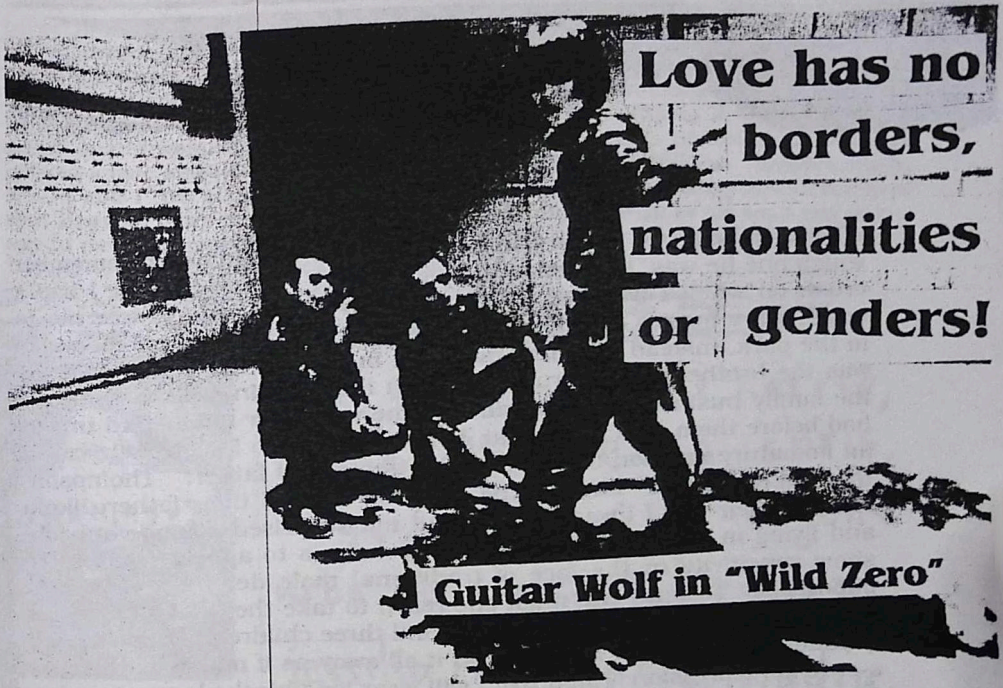
dan was up and down and up and down. "you are going to give yourself an ulcer." i stomped my foot "we lost." we in quotes. we joined by mutual dissent, not agreement. we the people

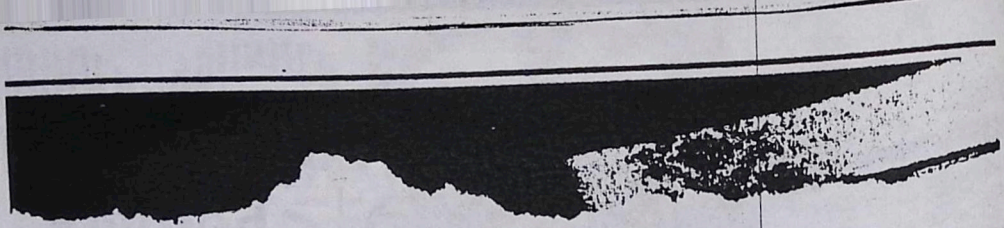
identity." This should be a battle cry to anyone

the worst part being tears in my best friends eyes while 11 states declared him a **second class citizen**

People are disappointing and annoying. Relationships are disappointing and annoying. I am frequently disappointing and annoying. I talk too loud and too much and sometimes not at all. Successful relationships are eating other people's shit because it doesn't taste so bad. People fuck up. Relationships are drawing a line in the sand and saying, "If you cross this line I will punch you in the face!" and then retreating because it isn't worth it. Not everything in the world is bad, just some things, and not always, just sometimes. I need a break and I need to give other people a break once in awhile. A life based on principles alone is a lonely life. Lately I've heard a lot about people who suck, or hurt, or are disappointing. I let people fade into the background. The bad ones and some of the good ones too. I am tired of fighting. I am tired of swimming up stream. I like you because the shit you do wrong isn't so wrong. Flaws are more interesting than holding up the psyche breaking illusion of perfection.



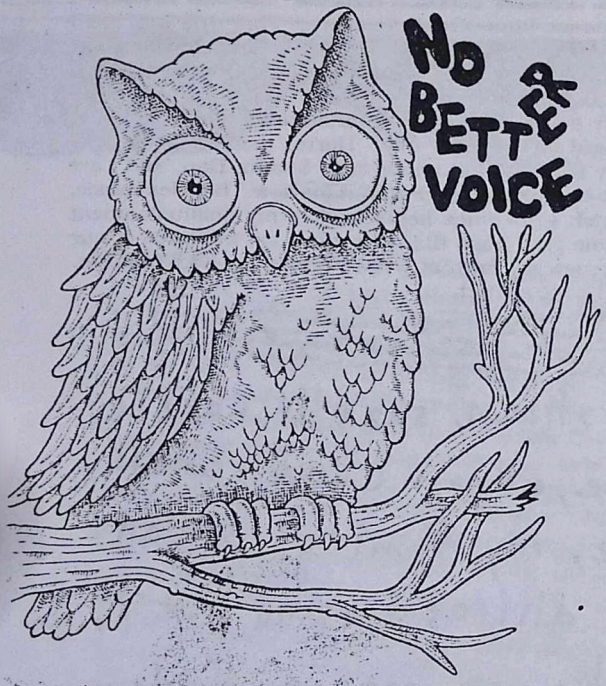

Love has no
borders,
nationalities
or genders!
Guitar Wolf in "Wild Zero"



When my mom told me he had hung himself I couldn't even remember which one he was, but I should have known. He was the one I had a crush on when I was five when all his brother's would force me to watch scary movies on television. He had actually taken me for walks to the park, instead of sitting me down in front of the television. He was the brother who'd struck it out on his own, instead of vying for the family business with his siblings the way their father and uncles had before them. He wasn't like his brothers, who I secretly hated in an immature reaction to the way they treated my father. "Thompson" they called him, or "Mr. T" The way they treated their father, like a relic, in their way. I was shocked but not surprised, losing your job, and living in a family where to ask for help is to appear weak. To show sensitivity in the face of traditional male dominance seemed impossible. To what end must one reach to take the final step? How could he bear to leave behind a wife and three children? Everyone will question how he could have thrown it all away as if money is the cure a cure for depression. Tomorrow I will wear long black sleeves to cover my tattoos so they don't make fun of my parents for the "way I turned out" while they bury their suicide son.

Sometimes I feel like I just talk because I am afraid of silence. This zine was made between December 30, 2004 and January 22, 2005. I recently saw that Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards have a new book out called Grassroots which may be the answer to all my Manifesta complaints. Only time will tell. If I ever have time to read it. Disabled seems to carry as many negative connotations as "lame." The United States makes more unilateral moves each day. Horror media glorifies the status quo. I wonder if self identity is really that important. Shaun, Dan, and I are making music ~~and I have no desire to make another zine right now~~. Besides music, Shaun and I run a zine distro which sometimes helps lead to my disillusionment with zines (ie more people order zine grab bags than the zines we went out of our way to pick and purchase). Help renew my faith at www.strangerdangerdistro.com. Thanks for your time and please write me a letter.

dan, shaun, suzette, carrie, layne, ellie, evan, chris, sage, my family, anyone who distroed issue # 27, jessika rae, maria, nadia.



cover art by chris pottinger

Lately whenever I see Chris Pottinger he is drunk on wine. It is only fair to mention that lately I only see him at art openings. Besides being a genuinely awesome guy, amazing artist, and crazy noise dude he also runs a label. For more of Chris' artwork and to check out his musical projects visit www.ihatetorock.com. This cover was also my first lesson in the trials and tribulations of Print Gocco.